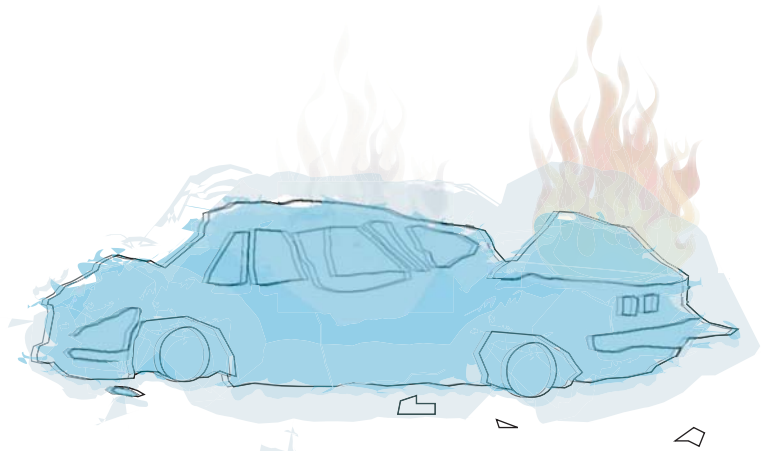


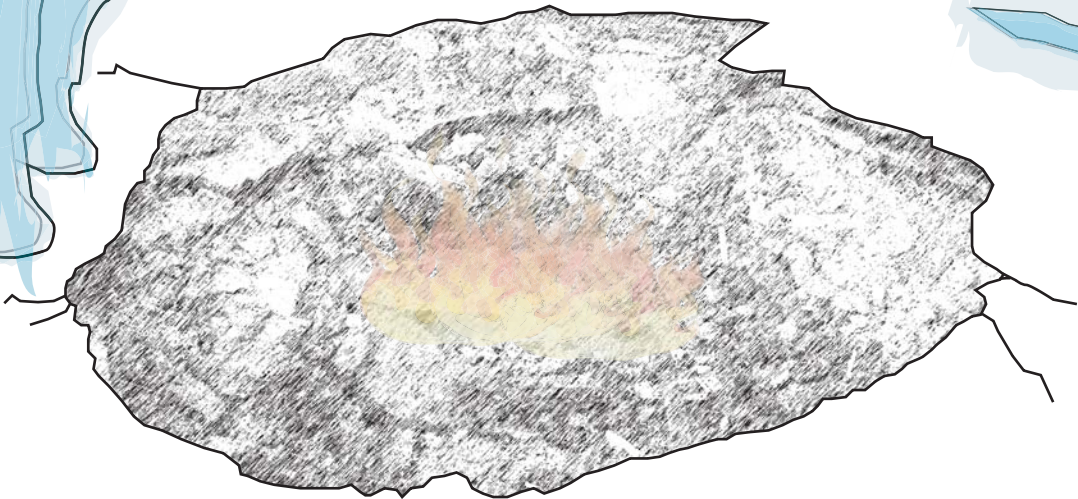
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A YEAR OF FIRSTS

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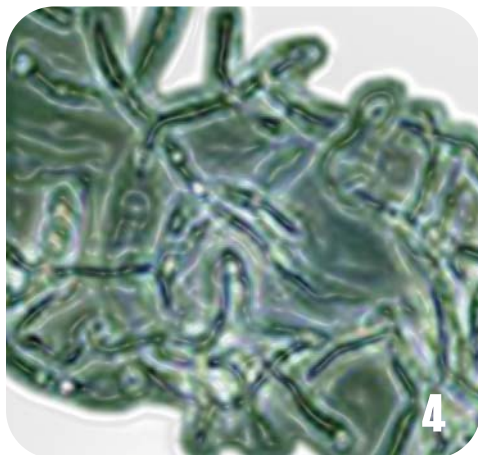
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Volume 26, Issue 44

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The Army has another great year. Find out how folks marked the occasion in the United States. Plus tips for wearing your helmet.

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On the Cover

Figuring out what is and isn't a threat isn't all that easy in Iraq, where telling the good guys from the bad is hardly black and white.

Photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

Army turns 230

By Monica Barrera

Army News Service

Celebrations took place across the United States June 14 and will continue throughout the week in honor of the Army's 230th birthday.

More than 20 Army bands performed across the country, from the commanding general's run at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, to a Magic Kingdom parade and Epcot Center concert in Orlando, Fla. Performances overseas included Camp Stanley, Korea. Army birthday ceremonies were also held at 14 different Major League Baseball games across the nation.

"This year, we are trying to reach out to the community more and more and expanding events," said Laura DeFrancisco, marketing director of the Army's Community Relations and Outreach Division.

In New York, "Good Morning America" and Fox News' "Dayside with Linda Vester" both covered Army Birthday celebrations and Flag Day parades held June 14. Members of the Association of the United States Army rang the bell to close the New York Stock Exchange. On June 18, the

Golden Knights Army Parachute Team will jump into Yankee Stadium.

Events in Los Angeles, Calif., began earlier in the week and will conclude with flag-raising at television stations.

Flag-raising, recruit swear-in ceremonies, concerts, festivals, and other salutes will take place in Chicago.

In Washington, D.C., events in tribute to the Army Birthday included a flag-raising ceremony at Fort Myer, Va., a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, a Pentagon Cake-Cutting and a Twilight Tattoo at the White House Ellipse.

Events throughout the rest of the week will include a cake-cutting at the Senate and House of Representatives June 15 and one at Walter Reed Army Medical Center June 16. The Army Birthday Ball for servicemen and women and invited guests will be June 18 at the Hilton Washington Hotel.

More than two dozen country-music artists recorded messages honoring Soldiers worldwide. Their public service announcements are available to TV station managers and program producers nationwide, at no cost. To view the recorded messages by country music artists to the Army,

visit the website at dvidshub.net.

Since 1775 – one year before the United States declared its independence in 1776 – the United States Army has protected and fought for the nation's freedom. "Every year we want to recognize the Soldiers who served, remember our heritage, and to honor those who are serving today," DeFrancisco said.

For more information about events to mark the Army's 230th birthday, visit the Army's special Web site at www.army.mil/birthday/230/.



Army birthday photos

Send us crisp, digital photos of how you and your friends marked the occasion. If they make the grade, your pics could be featured in the the June 22 issue of the Desert Voice.

Email to:

matthew.millham@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Subject line: Army birthday photo

You've only got one head, use it

By Sgt. Scott White

It wasn't until hours after the improvised explosive device blast that Staff Sgt. Shannon West realized his helmet had saved his life.

"Hey Sergeant West," his squad leader said. "Have you seen your Kevlar?" West removed his helmet and saw a pencil-sized hole in the front and a golf-ball sized knot on the inside.

West was traveling in a convoy from Baghdad International Airport to Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Iraq when the attack happened. All of the Soldiers in the convoy made it out with minimal wounds.

Had West not been wearing his helmet that day he would have undoubtedly been seriously injured, if not killed. Equally important is proper wear of the helmet

According to a recent Safety of Use Message, or SOUM, from the Army's Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command, improperly worn helmets can expose Soldiers to an increased risk of wounds and concussions from fragments.

While that may not sound like a ground

breaking statement, the fact is that a recent study cited by the SOUM says that roughly half of all Soldiers in the field are wearing the ground combat helmets improperly.

Most deployed Soldiers wear one of two types of ground helmets, the Personnel Armor System Ground Troops, which most people refer to as a Kevlar, or the Advanced Combat Helmet.

West was wearing the ACH. He didn't like it at first because he had "to adjust it every time you take it off," West said. But for him, proper wear of it obviously paid off.

So how do you know if you're wearing your helmet correctly? For the PASGT, a quick reference is to make sure the lower edge of the front rim is at the top of the eyebrow and level with the ground. Also, the bottom of the helmet should come to the bottom of the ear.

For the ACH, ensure that the front rim is about 1/2 inch above the eyebrow and the bottom of the helmet comes to the top of the Soldier's ear canal opening. Keep in mind that the ACH may not be the same size as previously-issued PASGT helmets.

For full instructions on proper wear of



Photo by Sgt. David Foley

Staff Sgt. Shannon West's Advanced Combat Helmet has an egg-sized knot on the inside, the product of fragments propelled by an IED near Baghdad, Iraq, in April.

both helmets visit www.peosoldier.army.mil and click the helmet link on the right. If you don't feel like reading, the site even has an eleven and a half minute video on how to fit the ACH. **(Editor's note: this story is based in part on an April 15 Army News Service release by Sgt. David Foley.)**



Anthrax vaccine now voluntary

The military's on-again, off-again relationship with the anthrax vaccine picks up again. This time, troops can decide for themselves whether to take it.

Story by Spc. Almee Felix

Coalition Forces Land Component Command officials plan to resume anthrax vaccinations in early July on a voluntary basis for servicemembers, Department of Defense civilians and U.S. contractors working in the CFLCC area of operations. However, the program will expire July 27.

An Oct. 27 court injunction halted mandatory anthrax vaccinations for U.S. servicemembers. The program was reinstated on a voluntary basis after Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld sought a modification to the injunction.

Rumsfeld's request was approved April 6 by the U. S. District Court of the District of Columbia, resulting in a new plan.

The new anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program follows the conditions of an emergency use authorization issued by the FDA. The EUA is a provision that allows the use of unapproved drugs or the unapproved use of approved drugs if the secretary of defense determines that there is a military emergency.

Under the new plan, CFLCC medical units have to inform all CFLCC personnel of the possible threat from anthrax as a bio-terrorism weapon and of the safety of the current anthrax vaccine. They must also give CFLCC personnel the opportunity to continue their anthrax vaccination series while in the CFLCC area of operations.

The FDA-licensed dosage schedule calls for an initial dose followed by a second dose two weeks later, a third dose at four weeks, a fourth dose at six months, a fifth dose at 12 months, a sixth dose at 18 months, and then a yearly booster.

But if Soldiers are behind on their schedule of doses, they don't have to start over. They can simply resume where they left off, said Maj. Aaron Silver, CFLCC force health protection officer.

CFLCC medical officials are still working on a plan to make the vaccine readily available to Soldiers across Kuwait, said Silver.

The DOD provided major commands with an education and information program, including an FDA-approved brochure that informs potential vaccine recipients and healthcare providers about the fact that the FDA has authorized the emergency use of the anthrax vaccine to prevent inhalation anthrax. Personnel will also be informed

about the vaccine's benefits and side effects before they decide whether or not to take the vaccine.

"I have never seen a severe reaction to the anthrax vaccine," said Col. Eldon Bell, a CFLCC surgeon, who has administered the vaccine since it came into use in the 1970s. Back then, the vaccine was given primarily to veterinarians, workers with a high risk of exposure to anthrax, such as lab and textile workers who processed imported wool hair and hides as well as livestock handlers.

The court's injunction that halted the vaccinations stated that the vaccine is an investigational drug or is unapproved for its current intended use, inhalation anthrax immunity. Also, the former vaccine program violated a congressional provision that prohibits giving servicemembers a vaccine unapproved for its intended use without consent.

There is evidence backing the vaccine's efficiency at providing immunity against

anthrax contracted by skin contact, but according to the courts, the FDA didn't provide sufficient evidence that the vaccine was effective against inhalation anthrax, said Col. John Grabenstein, director of the Military Vaccine Agency.

The FDA stands by the fact that the anthrax vaccine provides immunity against all forms of anthrax, whether it is contracted by breathing, skin contact or ingestion. The FDA backs its claim with a study conducted in the 1950s of 1,249 mill workers that showed the vaccine is 92.5 percent effective at preventing anthrax.

The FDA has been conducting an administrative review of its licensing and classification of the anthrax vaccine.

If the administrative review is not complete by July 27, DOD will request an extension to the vaccination deadline, said Grabenstein.

For current info on the anthrax vaccine, visit www.anthrax.mil or www.vaccines.mil.

Anthrax throughout history

- 1500 B.C. — Fifth Egyptian plague, affecting livestock, and the sixth, known as the plague of boils, symptomatic of anthrax
- 1600s — "Black Bane," thought to be anthrax, kills 60,000 cattle in Europe.
- 1876 — Robert Koch confirms bacterial origin of anthrax.
- 1880 — First successful immunization of livestock against anthrax.
- 1942 — United Kingdom experiments with anthrax at Gruinard Island off the coast of Scotland. It was only recently decontaminated.
- 1943 — United States begins developing anthrax weapons.
- 1945 — Anthrax outbreak in Iran kills 1 million sheep.
- 1950s and '60s — U.S. biological warfare program continues after World War II at Fort Detrick, Maryland.
- 1969 — President Richard Nixon ends United States' offensive biological weapons program. Defensive work continues.
- 1970 — Anthrax vaccine approved by U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- 1972 — International convention outlaws development or stockpiling of biological weapons.
- 1978-80 — Human anthrax epidemic strikes Zimbabwe, infecting more than 6,000 and killing as many as 100.
- 1991 — U.S. troops vaccinated for anthrax in preparation for Gulf War.
- 1995 — Iraq admits it produced 8,500 liters of concentrated anthrax as part of biological weapons program.
- 1998 — U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen approves anthrax vaccination plan for all military servicemembers.
- 2001 — A letter containing anthrax spores is mailed to NBC one week after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center. It was the first of a number of incidents around the country. In Florida, a man dies after inhaling anthrax at the offices of American Media Inc.

Source: CNN.com

Hurt by fire, healing with help

Story by Sgt. Matt Millham

In February, 10-year-old Maryam Murtada went outside to fill her family's generator with gasoline. Next thing she knew, she was enveloped in flames. Third-degree burns charred more than a quarter of her body.

If this sort of thing happened in the United States, her parents would have called an ambulance to rush her to a burn unit.

But in Um Qasr, Iraq, there is no ambulance company to call. Maryam's family brought her to Basrah, which had the closest Iraqi hospital, but doctors there said they couldn't treat her. They gave the family some antibiotic ointment and some bandages and sent them on their way.

With the aid of a local nurse, the family treated Maryam for about three weeks. In that time, the burns became infected, and Maryam lost 20 pounds as she succumbed to dehydration and malnutrition. When her parents carried her to the Camp Bucca detainment facility in southern Iraq looking for help, Maryam weighed just 26 pounds, about the same as a healthy 2-year-old.

"We really don't take civilians in here," said Lt. Col. Enrique de la Guardia, the deputy commander of clinical services at Bucca for Task Force 115th Med, which runs the medical operations for all major detention facilities in Iraq. "It's against all the orders."

But Maryam's parents pleaded with personnel there to help their dying daughter. "I thought she was going to die in a day or so," said de la Guardia, an Army doctor and general practitioner deployed from Fort Hood, Texas. After talking it over, the 115th medical personnel decided "whatever happens, happens; let's take care of her," said de la Guardia.

Maryam needed around-the-clock treatment, and everyone at the hospital pitched in, in some way, to help care for the girl. The girl's parents were put up in a room at the camp, and they required 24-hour supervision since they weren't technically allowed to be there.

In the weeks before Maryam came to Bucca, she had not gotten a single dose of pain medication. Her parents had changed her bandages a number of times, and every time the dressings were removed, the pain had been excruciating. The 115th gave the girl the first relief she'd had from the pain when they put her under anesthesia to change her bandages. They started Maryam on antibiotics and gave her intra-



Photo courtesy of Kuwait City Humanitarian Operations Center
Maryam Murtada, a 10-year-old Iraqi girl from Um Qasr, suffered third-degree burns over 28 percent of her body in February.

venous drips for nutrition and hydration.

After treating her at Bucca for four days, the 115th had Maryam medically evacuated to a burn center in Baghdad. The Italian medical unit that had been treating burn victims at the hospital had already packed up and left, and the Iraqi staff that had taken over turned out to be ill-equipped to treat burn patients, according to de la Guardia.

"The burn centers are there really in name only," said Maj. Glenn Rubalcava, the public health officer at the Humanitarian Operations Center, or HOC, in Kuwait City.

Maryam's father canvassed the burn unit and discovered that infection was rampant among patients there. He couldn't leave his daughter in these conditions. He took his daughter and his wife, got into a cab and headed back to Camp Bucca.

Two days after leaving Bucca, Maryam and her parents were again at the gates of the detainment facility begging for help. In the 48 hours since leaving the camp, the girl's condition had deteriorated. The first time the 115th treated Maryam, "We went three steps forward," said de la Guardia. The doctors at the burn unit "took her five steps back."

Assuming they were on their own to treat her, the 115th performed an operation that took skin from Maryam's thigh and grafted it to her abdomen. The 115th hadn't even heard of the HOC, which routinely finds help for Iraqi children and young adults who need treatment they can't get in Iraq. A Kuwaiti who works as a translator for the 115th at Bucca found out about the HOC and told de la Guardia there was hope the

girl could get treatment outside of Iraq. The translator, working with de la Guardia, began ferrying information about the girl's case between Bucca and Kuwait City.

Rubalcava, who has worked at the HOC since December, has handled more than two dozen cases of Iraqi children who need treatment for various illnesses and injuries that can't be treated by the struggling Iraqi medical system. But Murtada's case is probably the worst he's seen, he said.

Working with the non-governmental organization Global Medical Relief Fund, headquartered in Staten Island, N.Y., Rubalcava found a hospital to treat Murtada's burns: the Boston Shriners Hospital in Boston.

But while the HOC had found a hospital, the process of getting approval from U.S. government officials was mired in red tape.

As they waited for the green light from Washington, de la Guardia and others at the 115th and the HOC arranged for the girl and her mother to get Iraqi passports, Kuwaiti visas and commercial transportation from Kuwait to Boston, a process that took additional time.

With the help of the 105th Military Police Battalion, stationed at Camp Bucca, the 115th transported Maryam and her family by convoy to the Iraq-Kuwait border. Despite having all the necessary passports, visas and an MP escort bristling with weapons, Maryam's ordeal wasn't over; The Iraqi national guardsmen manning the border refused to let her and her mother over the border and forced de la Guardia to speak with their general. "It was kind of like a Mexican standoff for a minute," said de la Guardia. He went to talk with the general, and said to him, "Look, I'm a doctor. I'm trying to save this little girl's life," said de la Guardia. "Once I said that, his whole attitude changed, and he let her go."

After more than two months of treatment at Bucca, Maryam was flown to Boston from Kuwait May 26. She had progressed to the point that she could walk on her own, and was able to sit in a regular seat on the flight.

Doctors at the Shriners Hospital are concerned about the thickness of the scabs that now cover Maryam's burns, which affected most of her chest and neck as well as part of her arms. The scabs are anywhere from one-quarter to one-half of an inch thick.

Though she will undoubtedly have scars from her near-death encounter, thanks to the efforts of a handful of brave doctors in Iraq, a Kuwaiti interpreter and Kuwait's HOC, the girl has survived and has a chance at living a normal life.



Photos courtesy of the 58th Combat Engineer Company

The sun sets over Camp Liberty, which is in Baghdad's Sadr City district.

Inaugural experience

Story by Sgt. Matt Millham

Barely four weeks out of advanced individual training, and only three weeks after arriving at his first duty station, Pfc. Lee Shields found himself in Baghdad, Iraq, pulling dangerous missions for his unit, the 58th Combat Engineer Company from Fort Irwin, Calif.

He arrived in Iraq two months after the rest of the unit, and that made him, by default, the unit's "cherry." Until he saw any sort of action, Shields had to carry around a packet of cherry-flavored drink powder from a meal, ready to eat.

Four days into his tour and less than 24 hours after the cherry powder was issued, he wound up in his first improvised explosive device attack. Though he'd confront three more IED attacks, the first was the most memorable experience of his entire time in Iraq, he said.

Most Soldiers returning from tours in Iraq have war stories that have, for good or bad,

marked them. In speaking with Shields and other Soldiers from four different units that spent the last year attached to the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Brigade in Baghdad, it seems the experiences most Soldiers remember are their first experiences.

"I remember when we first rolled into Sadr City, it was a war zone — three months of straight fighting," said Staff Sgt. Jan-Marco Peterson, a tanker with Fort Riley's C Company, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor, who just finished his sophomore Iraq rotation. The beginning of his second tour was spent fighting forces loyal to rebel Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in the notorious Sadr City section of Baghdad.

Every Soldier lost by Peterson's unit was killed in Sadr City, he said. The bulk of the deaths didn't stem from major combat oper-

ations, though. Most were killed by enemy snipers after the fighting had died down in the insurgent enclave. One exception to that was the death of one of his former troops.

Spc. Yoe M. Aneiros Gonzales had been the loader on Peterson's tank crew when the 2/70th took part in the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Gonzales was transferred to a different platoon after he was promoted to specialist, but still, Peterson

was always nearby.

Peterson was there on Sept. 7, 2004, when Gonzales' tank came under a barrage of rocket-propelled grenade fire in the

heart of Sadr City. One of the RPGs bounced off the loader's hatch of Gonzales' tank and struck him in the head, killing him instantly. It was the first time a Soldier Peterson had personally mentored was killed, but what made it worse was that it happened on Gonzales' 20th birthday.

Spc. Tim Bassett, an infantryman and

"It was just amazing nobody got killed in that." — Spc. Tim Bassett



Left: An Improvised explosive device attack on one of the 58th Combat Engineer Company's M113 Armored Personnel Carriers in Baghdad's Sadr City severed both legs of Sgt. Manuel Mendoza Oct. 3, 2004. He survived and is recovering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Below: The 58th patrols Sadr City in the early hours of the day. **Center:** Staff Sgt. Jan-Marco Peterson, a member of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 270th Armor, was in this Abrams tank when it was hit by a vehicle-borne IED. The tank was almost undamaged, though the blast left a gaping hole in the road and killed Iraqis in passing cars (Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Jan-Marco Peterson). **Bottom:** To the 58th, there is no such thing as a one-way road while patrolling Baghdad.

Bradley Fighting Vehicle driver with B Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment from Fort Riley, Kan., must have had luck on his side when he got his first taste of car bombing in Baghdad.

His most memorable moment came when his Bradley responded to an RPG attack on a light infantry patrol from the 10th Mountain Division.

Just as Bassett showed up on the scene, near Abu Ghraib, an RPG flew out of nowhere, knocking off one of his Bradley's lights. Thankfully, the round didn't detonate. Relieved that the close encounter resulted in nothing more than another adrenaline rush, Bassett lowered the Bradley's ramp and his infantry squad dismounted to provide security for the pinned 10th Mountain Soldiers. Bassett had just gotten his ramp up when, out of nowhere it seemed, a Chevrolet Suburban loaded with explosives rammed into him from behind.

"It was just amazing nobody got killed in that," said Bassett.

Capt. Mark Stubenhofer, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company for the 1/41st wasn't so lucky. When Stubenhofer was killed by sniper fire on Dec. 7, 2004, the first death in the company since it arrived in Iraq, the incident stuck in Spc. Scott Sargent's mind, and remains his strongest memory of the deployment.

After Stubenhofer died, the entire company grew closer, said Sargent. It was like the company rallied around their fallen commander in death, and "it sort of super-bonded everyone together," said Sargent.

Not all first-time encounters for these Soldiers were memorable for their scrapes with death.

For Sgt. Michael Barton, a mechanic with the 58th Engineers, trips outside the confines of camp were few and far between. He really only went out once, and that was for a mission pitched as a 24-hour in-and-out job

that turned into an eight-day excursion around Abu Ghraib.

The added time outside the wire wasn't what made the mission memorable though. Barton had made points for his promotion to sergeant, and "I just kept bugging them about when I was going to get pinned," he said. His leadership decided to pin him outside the wire on the roof of a building near the prison. "My heart was pounding when we were just out there on the roof doing it," said Barton.

Spc. Douglas Westcott, a mechanic with Fort Irwin's 31st Maintenance Company, found his stint in Iraq memorable for the simple fact that this was his first deployment since he joined the Army more than five years ago. "Just being able to go out in combat was great," he said.

Sgt. Salvador Chavez, a member of the 58th Engineers, said the best part of the deployment was taking on the role of an infantryman, he said. Instead of certifying bridges or building obstacles, Chavez spent much of his time on patrol. "To me, that was the best part of my engineer career," he said.

Going out on patrols earned him the kind of street credibility that engineers and Soldiers in other non-combat jobs don't often get. "You can tell who goes out and who doesn't" just by what they do when there's an attack, he said. The guys who spend most of their time outside the wire don't flinch if a mortar drops on the camp, especially if they're in the middle of something like a phone call or e-mail. Those who don't go outside the camp sprint for cover, he said.

All these troops came to Kuwait more than a week ago to clean vehicles, a job that is often unpleasant and tedious. But spending time here before heading home was a good release from the rigors of combat, said Chavez. "I think it's a good thing to come here first and just slowly let it go."



IRR Soldiers to the rescue

Story by Spc. Curt Cashour

It's called the Individual Ready Reserve: a manpower pool spanning the entire military and consisting of nearly 300,000 people who have had military training, served previously in an active duty or Reserve unit, and have some period of military obligation remaining on their contracts.

IRR members are technically in an active status, but do not perform regularly scheduled training. Although some pundits and a few IRR Soldiers reluctant to deploy have cast the component in a negative light, the IRR also has its share of success stories.

IRR Soldiers are proving themselves to be "extremely valuable assets" in the war on terror, said David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, in a May 19 release from American Forces Information Service.

About 3,500 IRR Soldiers are serving in various capacities throughout the Central Command Theater, said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Anderson, United States Army Reserve Command personnel liaison officer for Coalition Forces Land Component Command. A number of these Soldiers are in Kuwait.

Sgt. Nicholas Alfarano said he uttered "a few choice four-letter words" when he found out he was being called up to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Pennsylvanian had been on IRR since 2000, when he left the Reserves to pursue a college degree.

After receiving his activation orders in June 2004, Alfarano had three months to prepare for his deployment.

Despite his initial frustrations, Alfarano said it didn't take him long to revert to the military lifestyle. A few days into his three-week train up at Fort Jackson, S.C., which covered everything from drill and ceremony techniques to tactics for handling insurgents and improvised explosive devices, Alfarano had gotten used to being in uniform again.

Alfarano has been at Camp Arifjan since November and now works for the 1st Battalion, 263rd Air Defense Artillery, a National Guard unit headquartered in Columbia, S.C. Both 263rd leaders and Soldiers have been helpful in making his deployment as manageable as possible, Alfarano said. In fact, Alfarano received a promotion to sergeant in March.

The 263rd personnel section works hard to ensure all Soldiers – IRR or not – eligible for promotion are promoted, said 263rd Zone 6 Officer in Charge Maj. James Peake, who added that three of the unit's six IRR Soldiers have been promoted during this deployment.

For the 263rd, which is responsible for keeping Zone 6 running smoothly, IRR troops fill manpower shortages that, if left vacant, could have a crippling effect on the unit, Peake said.

"For all the work we have to do, if we didn't have those extra IRR Soldiers, we'd be overwhelmed," he said.

Another 263rd IRR Soldier, Sgt. Janet Henderson had started a career as a second-grade teacher in Coppers Cove, Texas, after she left the Reserves in 2002.

She was called back to active duty in September 2004. Serving in Kuwait since November, the 263rd billeting NCO said she's doesn't regret being called up.

"My nation called, I answered. I'm proud to wear the flag on my sleeve," she said.

When Sgt. 1st Class Michael Zachgo learned about his impending deployment in September 2004, he hadn't donned an Army uniform in nearly 13 years.

He separated from the service in 1992 under the Voluntary Separation Incentive program. The program guaranteed Zachgo 35% of his Army salary for the next 30 years under one condition: that he remain a member of the Individual Ready Reserve.

The lull in service didn't bother Zachgo, who spent 15 years on active duty and likened this deployment to putting on an old glove.

A billeting NCO with the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery at Camp Spearhead, Zachgo has noticed some major changes in military quality of life between

now and his active duty days. Nowadays, living conditions are more comfortable and it is much easier to communicate with family members, said Zachgo, who added that during his time at Camp Pelham, Korea, he and his fellow Soldiers had no air conditioning and were permitted one morale phone call per month.

Another improvement is the amount of Army-related information available to troops over the Internet. During this deployment Zachgo has used Army Knowledge Online to study up on the Reserve component. Apparently he likes what he sees. Following this deployment, he plans to resume his military career in the Army Reserve, he said.

"This is another opportunity," he said. "I'm excited."

IRR Promotions

Are you an IRR Soldier who wants to be promoted? E-4s vying for E-5 need 300 promotion points and a completed DA-3355 promotion packet. E-5s going for E-6 need 350 points and the 3355.

The Theater Enlisted Promotions Division holds monthly boards where three board members review promotion packets. You don't have to be present for the board, and if two of the three members approve your packet, you're in. For more information contact Theater EPD at 318-430-7033 or visit them on the web at <http://w3.arifjan.arcent.army.mil> and click on the "SWA Enlisted Promotions" link.

Jesus Christ ... we pray to you

The Camp Arifjan Gospel Choir sings at a June 5 dedication for Arifjan's new Zone 1 chapel. The chapel has a seating capacity of 667, nearly three times that of the old chapel, said Staff Sgt. Amanda Fix, noncommissioned officer in charge of the camp's chaplain's office.



Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

So long Spearhead:

Camp Doha isn't the only camp in Kuwait that's closing.

Story by Spc. Almee Felix

Between a cement factory and an oil refinery is a camp Soldiers and Sailors have called home for more than two years, and now it's closing down.

Camp Spearhead, a camp located at the Seaport of Debarkation for troops who run the port's military operations, will officially close July 31.

The news of the decision, which was made after a year of planning, came to the Spearhead command group in early May.

Shutting down the camp is part of a long-term goal to move the U.S. military footprint from the towns and industries of Kuwait to the U.S. camps in Kuwait, said Col. Brick T. Miller, Area Support Group-Kuwait commander.

In the past, people have raised concerns about the air quality at Camp Spearhead. However, tests conducted by Coalition Forces Land Component Command preventive medicine personnel and members of the 95th Chemical Company have shown that the air is safe.

Nevertheless, Miller conceded the area around Spearhead does tend to stink. Now that it can be avoided, Miller prefers to not have Soldiers in that environment.

The move will also cut costs. A lot of money goes into maintaining the force protection tents that house Spearhead residents. Because the tents are not designed for maintaining a permanent operation, they require regular maintenance services, Miller said.

The money saved from the closure of Spearhead will be put into quality of life improvements at Kuwait Naval Base, where a number of Spearhead residents will soon reside, Miller said.

In the coming weeks, Spearhead residents, which total about 650 permanent party and transient Soldiers, will move into pre-cast billets at either Camp Arifjan or Kuwait Naval Base. The deadline for the completion of KNB's PCBs is set for July 4, just in time for Spearhead residents to move in.

It will be the responsibility of each unit that works at the SPOD to shuttle its troops to and from work, said Camp Spearhead Commander Maj. Roy Macaraeg, with the Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery, 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery. The units have a fleet of shuttle buses and non-tactical vehicles, so the commute should not be a problem, said Macaraeg.

There will be a short-order dining facility, a fire station and a troop medical clinic portside, for troops to visit throughout the work day, said Miller.

The 20 members of the 143rd Transportation Command, the unit in charge of port operations, have already moved to KNB.

"We'll definitely meet our deadline," said Macaraeg, who added that the most difficult part of the process has been the immense amount of paperwork he has to submit just to take down a row of tents.

"I'm looking forward to stretching out at KNB," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Zachgo, billeting noncommissioned officer in charge for Camp Spearhead. At Spearhead, Zachgo said he goes from his tent, to the DFAC, to the command cell, and then right back to his tent. He is looking forward to the access to the beach and trees at KNB, he said, adding that the air is a little fresher at KNB.

While living at KNB will have its advantages, Staff Sgt. Francisco Santos, a Camp Spearhead billeting NCO got used to living at Spearhead. "It feels like home already," said the Vietnam veteran.

Because the work of taking down the camp is being contracted out, Soldiers can spend their down time packing their own things.



Photo by Master Sgt. Hak Haskins

A worker empties sand bags into a loader during preparations to remove another tent from Camp Spearhead June 2. The bags had been used to anchor in place one of the camp's tents. The camp, which is located at the Seaport of Debarkation, will close July 31.

For Santos, packing will be a little more difficult than he originally thought. Since beginning to gather his things, he's realized he has a lot more belongings than he thought.

The troops don't have a limit on what they can bring to their new homes, but they expect to have less space than what the tents at Spearhead provide, so they're trying to travel light. The lines at the Spearhead Post Office have been a lot longer recently because troops have been mailing home items they don't want to get rid of, but won't have room for.

Though he is glad most of his friends will be stationed with him at KNB, Spc. Vaatofu Fai is sad to leave Spearhead because of the cohesion the camp residents had developed through all the regular Morale Welfare and Recreation events and barbecues the MWR folks at the command cell held.

"Camp Arifjan and KNB, those are like the big cities. The SPOD has that small town feel," said Macaraeg.

The small town of Spearhead will soon be nothing but land, as contractors take down the tents, row by row.

Once it is completely stripped, the plot of land on which Spearhead sits will be returned back to the Kuwaitis, who plan to build a plastics factory at the site.

I got it at the PX

Deals so hot, you'll forget about the weather

By Spc. Curt Cashour



\$1.99

3M Nexcare Winnie the Pooh bandages

You probably never thought it would be possible, but now you can wear Pooh on your skin. This package includes nine Pooh variations – enough to wear a different piece of Pooh every day. The best part? With 25 Poohs in a box, it will be days, if not weeks before you run out of Pooh.



\$3.70

Absorbine Jr. pain relieving liquid

Junior's father, a powerful podiatric potion by the name of Absorbine Sr., never quite got the recognition he desired. There just wasn't enough demand for his one-dimensional talent for healing hot, itchy feet. The elder Absorbine wasn't about to let his son's talents go to waste. He sent Junior to the Swiss Alps to study with top ointments Bengay and Preparation H. After years of intensive training, Junior was among the best at relieving arthritis and sore muscle pain. Despite his primary profession, the young liniment still enjoys going to work on a pair of hot, itchy feet in his free time. Like father, like son.



\$1.55

Optic Aids glasses repair kit

Here's a nickel's worth of free advice: if your glasses look anything like the ones pictured on this package, they're not worth the \$1.55 it costs to buy the kit.

Georgia meets Virginia



Georgian Army Capt. David Usenashvili shows his AK-47 to Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Hoehn June 10. Usenashvili and his unit, Commado Battalion, spent a week at Camp Virginia before redeploying to Georgia.

Photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Patton's Own Peachtree Road Race

Participate in the largest 10K road race in the world. The contest starts at 5 a.m. July 4 at Camp Arifjan and will be held in conjunction with the Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta. In order to compete, fill out a registration form at the Zone 1 Fitness Center by 5 p.m. June 30.



Community

happenings for June 15 through June 22

Arifjan

Wednesday

Arizona Cardinals Cheerleaders Variety Show, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
 Father's Day Fashion Show models sign-up deadline, Community Center
 Country Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
 Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Thursday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m. Circuit Weight Training 3 p.m., Zone 2 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Friday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym
 Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Interval training, 5:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Zone 1 gym

Saturday

Hip Hop Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Bench Press Competition, 7 p.m., Zone 1 gym
 Audie Murphy Club study sessions, 3 p.m., Building 508 Room 25B
 Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR stage
 Circuit weight training, 5:30 a.m., 8 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

Father's Day Fashion Show, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Summer Basketball begins, Zone 1 gym
 Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Monday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Tuesday

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
 Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8 a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Wednesday

Spades Tournament, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
 Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
 Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex 8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
 Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

For more information call 430-1202

Buehring

Wednesday

Chess Tournament, 7 p.m., MWR Bunker

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole

Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

Thursday

Arizona Cardinals Cheerleaders Variety Show, 7 p.m. (Call for info)

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Friday

Weightlifting Competition, 5 p.m., Gym
 Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole

Saturday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1
 Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Sunday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tent 1
 Walking Club (10 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole

Monday

Massage Therapy, 9:30 a.m., MWR Tent
 Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

Tuesday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Wednesday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell flagpole
 Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

For more information call 828-1340

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Friday

Poker, Spades, Trumps, Black Jack Tournament, (Call for info)

Sunday

Father's Day 5K run (Call for info)

For more information call 839-1063

Navistar

Wednesday

Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Thursday

Horseshoe Tournament (Call for info)

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Friday

Horseshoe Tournament (Call for info) Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

Saturday

Computer Pinball Tournament, 6 - 10 p.m., computer tent

Sunday

Computer Pinball Tournament, 6 - 10 p.m., computer tent

Monday

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Tuesday

Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court
 Smoking Cessation Classes, 10 a.m., Rec. tent
 Education/Awareness/Prevention, 1 p.m., Rec. tent

Wednesday

Self Defense Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

For more information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Thursday

NBA tour, 3:45 - 5:45 p.m. (Call for info)

Friday

Survivor M&G, 8 to 10 a.m.

Saturday

Kempo, 4 p.m. (Call for info)

Movie Night, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

Sunday

Bazaar (Call for info)

Tuesday

Spa Day (Call for info)

Wednesday

Club night, 8 p.m., (Call for info)

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Thursday

Ping Pong tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Saturday

Hip Hop/R&B Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

Dominoes Tournament, 6 p.m., Dusty Room

Sunday

Old School Jams, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Billiards Tournament, 6 p.m., MWR tent

Monday

Move Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Spa Day, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., MWR tent

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Wednesday

Horseshoe Tournament, 4 p.m. (Call for info)

Country Western Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

For more information call 832-1045

Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

Departs Doha Stop 1*	Arrives Doha Stop 2*	Departs Doha Stop 2*	Arrives Arifjan	Departs Arifjan	Arrives Doha
				0545	
	0700	0715	0830	0845	1000
1015	1025	1040	1200	1300	1430
1445	1450	1505	1615	1630	1745
1900	1910	1925	2045		

* Stop 1 is behind the Building 6 PAX Tent

Stop 2 is between Buildings 28 and 31

Are you holding an event you'd like to see listed in the DV?

Send your event listings to the Desert Voice editor at the e-mail address listed on the back page of this issue.

When God Picks an Angel

By Spc. Santovia Hornsby
807th Signal Company

When God picks an angel, God only picks the very best.

God chooses when to call them home so that they may rest.

When one is called to be God's angel, they must answer his voice.

They do not have time for questions, doubts, goodbyes or to hesitate; it is not a matter of their choice.

Yes, at times God's angels unfortunately have to leave behind loved ones, family, friends and even small kids to raise.

But amidst all the hurt and the tears, God should still get all the glory and praise.

I know that you loved this person and do not want to be without him.

But God loved him more and gave his only son just so he could forever be with him.

One way to deal with your lost may be to always dwell on the good times that you had with each other and help one another to stay strong.

Also, remember that God is too wise to make a mistake and to just do anybody wrong.

-dedicated to the family, friends and loved ones of Sgt. Miguel "Angel" Ramos

Send your
submissions to:
**DESERT
VOICE**

Editor
CFLCC PAO/Desert Voice
Camp Arifjan
APO AE 09306
matthew.millham@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Find us online at
www.dvidshub.net

Safety Corner

In case of fire...

From the 377th Theater Support Command Safety Office

Remembering the acronym **S.P.E.E.D.** will help you during a fire.

Sound the alarm. Activate the alarm system if available, if not available yell FIRE.

Phone the fire department (DSN: 911 or Cell: 389-9911) from a safe location.

Evacuate the area. Assist others without jeopardizing your own safety.

Extinguish the fire if it is small enough and safe to do so using a fire extinguisher.

Direct the fire department by phone. Escort them if the location is hard to find.

For questions or comments on this information or to register for upcoming safety classes contact the 377th safety office's Maj. Phelps at DSN 430-6113 or 1st Lt. Surgi at 430-5414.

By Capt. Paul Nichols
377th Theater Support Command

